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## UNDER THE PINES.

BY MARIE J. MCCLURE.

Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Sweet murmured on the night breeze  
The river's distant flow;  
But sweeter the story often,  
A loved voice whispered low,  
Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Only a year ago.

Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Once again a marble stone,  
And I saw through a rain of tears  
A proud face pale and set;  
While I scarce could sob—"farewell, love,"  
No bitter was my woe,  
When we parted, beneath the moonlight,  
Only a year ago.

Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Alone did I often stray,  
To dream o'er the moments passed there  
With the dear one, far away,  
And pray for the time he could proudly  
His sword to its sheath restore,  
And under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Wander with me once more.

Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Gleamed a marble stone,  
And low beside a grass-grown mound  
I knelt to-night, alone,  
For here my darling lay,  
In the grave so dark and deep,  
Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Sleeping his long, last sleep.

Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
Oft do I now in prayer  
For the burden of my sorrow  
Be no more than I can bear;  
Life is not life without him—  
O, that I could rest  
Under the pines, in the moonlight,  
The spot above my breast.

## THE WHITE LADY; OR, The Brierton Mystery.

### CHAPTER IV.

"This is a bad job—a very bad job!" said Farmer Merridew, bringing his stout oaken stick down with a mighty crash on the twinkling blossoms and cool grasses. "There has been foul play here, I doubt." Ah, foul indeed! As foul as when the first murderer covered away from his offended Maker, with the bitter brand on his brow! But there was no mark on this destroyer that men might know him by, and track him to his doom.

The reeds knew all, and murmured together of the wrong they had seen; but they had no human voices with which to enlighten others.

Farmer Merridew pondered for a moment, and then turned to his man.

"Take the gentleman to the farm," he said, in an unusually softened tone; "and we will send for Squire de Lacy. He is good and wise, and will know what is best to be done."

But Squire de Lacy had gone to town, as it happened, and was not expected home till the next day. Still, it was hours before Captain Vane straggled back to scene and sight once more. He saw three faces hovering about his bed—all of them strange—and shrank back within himself, and moaned.

One of these faces—the face of a man, set in a halo of white, shining hair—bent over him so close that the eager breath fanned his cheek.

"Who are you, and where do you come from? You can tell us this now, perhaps?"

Captain Vane glanced up at him with dazed, bewildered eyes; and for some reason, inexplicable to the lookers-on, he thrust forward his hands, and cried, with inexpressible horror, "Go away! the sight of you kills me!"

"Poor fellow, he raves! and no wonder!" said the white-haired man, turning quickly to Mrs. Merridew. "Delia, perhaps, after all, I had best leave him with you. He needs consolation most of all, and that comes so much better from women's lips."

"Nay, sir," said Mrs. Merridew, with honest admiration; "if you fail, there can't be much chance for us."

He waved his hand, as if to deprecate this flattery.

"You do me far more than justice, my good friend!"

"Oh, Squire de Lacy, how could any one do that?"

At this name, the sick man sat up straight in bed, and glared at the other wildly.

"I had a feeling that I ought to hate you!" he cried, with sullen rage. "You are one of those who gain by my poor love's death!"

A tremor went through Squire de Lacy's frame, shaking him as an aspen leaf is shaken by a rough wind.

"You are the man, then, who was to have married the poor child who has, I am afraid, been taken from us?" he asked, in a voice broken and tremulous from emotion; "the man who was to have welcomed home yesterday? I feared as much—I sadly feared as much. No wonder you are unjust."

"No wonder I am so just," retorted Captain Vane, obstinately. "It was you who killed her."

The old man drew back very white, but meekly reproachful.

"I cannot repeat anything you say to me now, Captain Vane, for trouble has turned your brain. When you know me, you will understand how impossible and cruel your accusation is. But I am not heartless, no! I might feel even as you feel, if I suffered as you suffer. Lie down and rest, and let these gentle women tend

you. When you are stronger, and need me, I will come again. Until then, you will have all my sympathy—when the right time comes, all my aid."

He went off slowly, his white, shimmering hair lending a kind of serene radiance to his benevolent face.

In passing Mrs. Merridew, he smiled gently and touched her forehead lightly, as if with his fingers. Then, sighing softly under his breath, he went downstairs, closing the door behind him.

Captain Vane seemed greatly relieved then, and turned inquiringly to Delia.

"What is that man's name?"

"Squire de Lacy, sir."

"Yes, yes; but I mean his Christian name," answered Captain Vane, in a somewhat irritable tone.

"James, sir, I fancy."

"Thank you; I thought as much. And now I mean to get up."

Mrs. Merridew had left the room in order to attend Mr. de Lacy, and so Delia was left to cope with this difficulty alone. It was quite clear that Captain Vane was in a raging fever, and any sudden chill might cost him his life.

Delia, like most village maidens, knew something of the art of healing, and was an excellent nurse. Instead of contradicting her patient, she soothed and humored him, promising him that if he laid quite still now, he should get up in the evening.

"You see," he said, apologetically, "I have so much to do."

"I am sure you have,"

He raised himself on his elbow, and added, with solemn earnestness, "Listen to me. Some relentless hand has robbed an innocent girl of life, and one of all that makes life precious. But, as sure as there is a Heaven above, I will find out the man or woman who did the deed, and make him repent it through every nerve and fibre of his body."

"If he is mad," thought Delia, "there is a great deal of method in his madness. He says just what any other man would say in his place—and who can blame him?"

But she did not remark this aloud; she only coaxed his burning head back upon the pillow again, and tried to divert his mind to other subjects. But Captain Vane could only speak and think of one thing; and, strange to say, in the excitement of his nerves, he remembered rather the possibility of revenge than the reality of sorrow.

The doctor, hastily summoned, came straight to the bedside of the unhappy man, who was tossing and groaning in fevered, tumultuous unrest.

Every one knew by this time that poor Winifred had gone out to meet her lover, and never returned. Some of the villagers had even seen her, as they passed, leaning against the stile, with a sweet, serene contemplative face, waiting for her happiness.

That she had met foul play no one could doubt. The squire and his daughter were able to identify the hat and veil as those she had worn on leaving the house for this interview; and both had been found in Captain Vane's possession when Mr. Merridew and his man carried him into the house.

But the doctor thought only of his patient now.

The fever had increased so rapidly, that even before he arrived Captain Vane was unconscious.

But though he raved of his love in happy, earlier days, and even of his life in India, not a single reference to poor Winifred's untimely fate crossed his burning lips.

He spoke to her perpetually, calling her

by those tender names that lovers use; but she was always living to him.

CHAPTER V.  
TAKEN PRISONER.

Captain Vane awoke with a sense on him of some heavy, dull weight of oppression and terrible weakness, just as people wake out of a painful dream in the dead of the night.

Mrs. Merridew had kept Delia with her, to act as nurse; and here was the face his eyes opened upon wearily, weakly, when his nightmare was over.

Seeing the light of reason once more in those eyes, uplifted so heavily, the girl bent over him, with a cheerful smile.

"I have been ill?" he asked.

There was no motive for disguising the truth; and so she answered, softly, "yes, sir; you have."

"Very ill?"

"I am afraid so; but that cannot signify now that you are so much better."

"So much better!" he repeated, mechanically, and looked at her with a coldly curious air. "And, pray, whom may you be?"

"I am Mrs. Merridew's niece, sir."

"And who is Mrs. Merridew?"

"She is the wife of the farmer here."

"Ah!"

And he relapsed into silence, seeming to ponder these things in his mind.

Presently, he spoke again.

"I want to get well as quickly as possible; I have so much to do."

"I am sure you have."

She knew that, in the hearts of all men, he was judged guilty of the crime of having killed Winifred de Lacy in a fit of jealous passion; and it saddened her to hear him speak of a future which might never be.

Not that she believed this of him for a single second. She was much too loyal and true.

But then her faith would go for nothing against the fatal weight of evidence that could be adduced on the opposite side.

She had gone out to meet him; that, Mr. de Lacy, with whom she had been staying at the time, acknowledged with Christian reluctance, being most unwilling to criminate her lover, if he could help it. No one had witnessed their meeting; but that it had actually taken place there seemed no doubt.

His illness was attributed to remorse rather than to sorrow, and instead of softening people toward him, rather hardened their hearts, as it appeared like the consequence and proof of his crime.

Mr. and Mrs. Merridew were the only people in Brierton, besides Delia, who were not prejudiced that their roof covered a wretched sinner, who had taken the life of a gentle young creature who loved him to her destruction.

"Why, hang it, wife!" the farmer exclaimed, when he heard this report for the first time, "if I believed that, I'd chuck him out of doors without mercy; but I don't believe it, and I won't!"

"Nor I!" answered Mrs. Merridew, steadily. "My eyes don't deceive me so easily as all that!"

"You're just of my mind, mistress. Why, when my corn was stolen, didn't I find out the thief by just looking at him? There's no mistaking guilt. You squire gives you back your look honestly and readily; and a guilty man hangs his head, is shy of observation, and quick of fear. If they talked till they were black in the face, it wouldn't make me believe there was any harm in our visitor."

"Of course there isn't. But who did it, then?"

"That's beyond me, and beyond the

lawyers, too; but time will show, my dear."

"Fancy his fixing on the squire," said Mrs. Merridew, smiling at the absurdity of the selection.

"But people, when they are mad, are sure to hit upon the most unlikely. He won't say that when he gets better."

When Captain Vane got better, he said nothing. They wondered at his reserve, being plain-spoken, blunt people themselves; but it was a part of his purpose to work diligently, without letting any human being guess his intention.

Meanwhile, the rumor which had fastened on him as the murderer gathered strength and consistency. It was already an established fact in the minds of the credulous villagers, and they resolved to brood and stone him as soon as he came forth.

All unconscious of their design, also of the terrible suspicion that was gathering working its way toward them in authority, Captain Vane took advantage of his hours of weakness to mature his plans.

Had the paper he had received from Mr. Langley under his pillow, and consulted it frequently.

Delia often heard him repeat these three names, and in a muttering fashion, and wondered why.

But he gave her no hint. And as his health mended, there came such an expression of rigid, calm determination on his face, that she could have been bold indeed if he had dared to question him.

One day he put the paper aside, as if now it had served its purpose, and said, gravely—

"I mean to get up to-day, Delia. I am wasting a good deal of valuable time lying here, and I am quite strong now."

But give yourself one more day of rest, she pleaded.

"Not another hour!" he answered, firmly. "You don't understand."

"I understand that you will be ill again, if you exert yourself too soon."

He shook his head decidedly.

"I shall not be ill now."

"Why not now?"

"You don't understand," he repeated, with some irritation. "I told you so before."

Delia desisted then, and left him, believing that he would find out his weakness when he began to move. But, to her surprise, he dressed himself entirely, in a very short space of time, and came out of his room with a little glow of excitement on his face, and a firm, steady step.

He was sitting in the low window-seat waiting. She had fetched him a glass of wine and a large slice of sweet, white bread, thinking he would be satisfied with his coffee, and he smiled on her, for the first time, as he took them from her hand.

"What a thoughtful child you are!" she blushed and trembled at his praise, and hazarded a shy glance into his stern face.

If it were Delia's fate to love this man, it would be hard indeed—for he had no more thought of her than the moon has of the flowers that worship it from afar, with bowed heads.

He knew that she was lovely, but he recognized this as solely as the moon recognizes the beauty of the flowers. He believed that all passions, all tenderness were buried in the grave of his first love, and that he had done with life, except for the sake of revenge.

He sat his bread, and drank his wine, sitting on the low seat beside Delia; and then, refreshed and strengthened, he rose to his feet again, declaring he must go to his work, for there was no time to spare.

Delia stepped before him, saying, passionately, "don't go till I have told you something, sir. I have been wondering if you would hate me if I did; and yet, somehow, I think it would come best from me."

"What is it?" he asked, without sign of curiosity. "I am sure you would not pain me unnecessarily, Delia."

"Oh, no, no!" she answered, fervently. And then, gathering up all her courage, she added, "the police are down-stairs with uncle."

"What, then?"

"Oh, sir, don't you understand?"

"They have found out her destroyer?" he hazarded; and the words came out very faintly.

Delia covered her face for a moment, and then she said, with a choking sob, "Me!"

He stared at her incredulously. It was clear that she was in a state of excitement, and he wondered if she had ever entered his brain.

"But I loved her," he murmured, half aloud. "Do they know that, I wonder? How can a man kill that which makes all his joy and happiness, all his future on earth?"

"But men are so base and cruel," said Delia. "If Heaven judged as harshly as they do, what would become of us all?"

"What will become of us now?" he observed, with a bewildered glance out of the window, where he could see dimly, through the hot haze, Burton Wood, and beside it, with its green, treacherous glitter.

"Hark!" exclaimed Delia, under her breath. "They are coming for you!"

"Let them come!" he answered, straightening himself defiantly, as heavy steps and rough voices were heard in the hall below.

"If I can prove that I killed my darling, I will save them the trouble of hanging me, that is all!"

He stood calmly waiting, whilst the sound of every tread went to Delia's heart, and made her shudder and sigh. If she only dared, she would have flung her weak arms about him, and sheltered him with her body from the assaults of his enemies; but then the flower that loves the moon has only to repeat and die.

The men evidently expected some resistance, for directly they caught sight of Captain Vane, they began their usual formula about "coming peaceable, and would be the better for him in the long run."

"I am quite ready," was the calm reply. Then he bent down to Delia.

"Thank you for all your goodness," he said, in a gratefully low voice, as he spoke.

"We shall meet again in happier times."

"I hope so," responded Delia, with tears in her voice.

"Truth will always prevail, Delia; be sure of that. The mystery of my darling's death seems impenetrable just now; but wait one year, and then see."

"What shall I see then?"

"You will see the dark things made light—the obscure clear," he answered, dreamily and prophetically. "A patient man is better than a king, for he possesses the whole world. I know that if I wait, I shall gain the knowledge I require at last. Now I am ready," he continued, to the men. "I should only ask to be allowed to thank my host, in passing, for the kindness he has shown me."

But both Mr. and Mrs. Merridew had disappeared. They could not bear that their guest should be carried from their house to a prison, and had not the heart to witness his departure.

Through the secret scented lanes, bright with hedge-flowers, Captain Vane went his

dreary way. But the perfumes scattered so lavishly on the still, summer air, reminded him of the morning, two weeks ago, when he had walked joyfully through them to keep tryst with his love, and the flood of memories they evoked turned him sick and faint.

He stood still, panting.

"Are we obliged to wait?" he asked, looking imploringly at his guard.

"Not if you ain't afeard to it—oh, no!" one of them replied. "There's a conveyance to be had at the inn, and I can't say myself but what driving would be the pleasantest way of the two, as you ain't afeard to wait."

"I am sorry to give you so much trouble," said Captain Vane, politely.

"That's no matter. I must say this for you—you are a very peaceable guest in your manner," replied the policeman, doing involuntary homage to the perfect breeding of his prisoner.

"I suppose," observed the young officer, with a faint smile, "you don't often take gentlemen?"

"Well, no. Our business lays chiefly with poachers, and such like; and sometimes we have a deal of trouble to get them along; but your behavior does you credit, sir."

The "sir" dropped out unawares, for William Bence, to do him justice, was not in the habit of being so civil as this.

"I am glad I give satisfaction," responded the other, with ironical emphasis. "It must be much more agreeable for you."

"A deal more agreeable for both parties. That's what I always tell them; but, lor, they're so obstinate, they won't be persuaded, though I must know best."

Captain Vane found himself an object of painful interest to the men, collected about the green as they crossed it, but he held himself bravely, nevertheless.

When they entered the inn, the mob followed, and crowded into the bar, and blocked up the doorway. But the police, being accustomed to this sort of thing, soon dispersed the curious gazers, and the prisoner had a quiet interval whilst the horse was being harnessed.

Once the pretty bar-maid came in on some errand, and looked at him compassionately. But her eyes were soft and very beautiful, and their gentle glance soothed rather than hurt him.

He bowed in grateful recognition of her sympathy; and after that, Mary would not have believed in his guilt, even if there had been a witness to swear to the fact.

But, then, he had such a handsome face, and his female mind is unduly impressed with such things.

As the gates of the prison opened noisily, to let him through, Captain Vane's heart sank within him, and a momentary sense of fear and horror came upon him.

Liberty is dear to all men, but it was specially dear to Captain Vane just now.

The only comfort he had had in his great sorrow was the thought of avenging his beloved, and bringing her destroyer to justice.

He had carefully treasured the button and fragment of cloth he had found by the river-side; and hoped, some day, to use this against the man who had killed her.

He was searched on entering the prison, but he managed to elude the vigilance of the ganders; and no sooner did he find himself alone in his cell, than he consulted it in the mattress of his palatial bed. Then he sat down, and calmly reviewed his position. He decided to ask Mr. Langley to undertake his defence, feeling sure that, having known him from his youth, he would not be likely to doubt his innocence.

Then, without fear, he resigned himself to the chances of the future.

"If the worst comes to the worst," he thought, "life has no charms for me that I should care to prolong it. I would faint just to avenge my darling; but if this is denied me, the end has no terror in my sight, since it promises me a happy meeting with her in Heaven."

Even the thought of her, in her young beauty and brightness, "out down like the grass," became an unbearable, agonized memory; and, covering his face, he wept like a child.

"Oh, my love, my love! if I might only have died for thee!" was his wild cry, as the night, dark and stormy, and starless, darkened around his prison walls.

A forlorn wail sighed as he sighed, and made soft moans, only he heard nothing but the passionate thrummings of his own heart, crying mutely, when his lips ceased.

"Oh, my love, my love! if I might only have died for thee!"

CHAPTER VI.  
NOT PROVEN.

Captain Vane had not long to wait before his trial came on. He wondered who were to be the witnesses against him, and was shocked to find that Delia was cited to appear for the prosecution, knowing how this necessity would pain her tender heart.

He sent her a kindly message, through Mr. Langley, not to distress herself as nothing she had to say could harm him; and Delia wept in pure thankfulness.

She had been torturing herself with the fear that he might think she went willingly and without due regard to consequences.

But this assurance, direct from his lips, comforted her greatly, and made the task before her possible, if not easy.

Captain Vane congratulated himself again and again that he had no mother living to



THE ARREST OF CAPTAIN VANE.



he suffered by his ill fortune, and yet sometimes he longed, like a child, for some shoulder on which to lay down his weary head, for some sympathetic ear in which to whisper all his sorrows.

He believed that he had done with all other love, just when he had most need of it. He could not see beyond the dark cloud that now overshadowed his life.

His wonderful patience, amounting almost to indifference at the trial, astonished his judges. It was not obliged to be the calmness of innocence, for guilty men could feign it at times; but it made a favorable impression, nevertheless.

They could prove that Winifred de Lacy had gone to the meeting with him, and never returned; they could prove that he had also been there; but beyond this they could not reach, for the river flowed to the great sea, which seldom gives up its dead.

They could hardly have quarreled, since they had not been together for years.

Mr. de Lacy and his daughter both reluctantly identified the hat and veil as the ones they had seen her wear when leaving the house, and the police having measured the footprints on the bank where the grass gave a good impression of a small, arched foot, they exactly corresponded with a boot of Winifred's produced in court.

The other footprints had been carefully obliterated, showing that her companion was anxious to escape detection, and had not been too negligent to take proper precautions. Therefore, his previous conduct explained his subsequent plea of "Not guilty," and showed that he hoped to escape the consequences of his crime, to the official mind.

The spirit and his daughter also testified that the unfortunate girl left their home for the place of the rendezvous at five minutes to six precisely, and when this fact came out, Captain Vane could hardly suppress a cry of anguish.

If he had but lingered rather less on the way, and given Winifred credit for a little impetuosity, as well as himself, she might have been alive now.

But what was the use of these regrets? They could not call his darling back to life; neither could they avenge her. He must conquer every sorrow or instinct that might hinder him in his purpose.

The verdict of the jury, "Not guilty," made him free once again. The Scotch law would have had it "Not proven," but we give our prisoners the full benefit of any doubt, and hold them absolutely innocent if we cannot prove them absolutely guilty.

Captain Vane was released from prison, and breaking away from Mr. Langley's congratulations, he passed alone out of the frowning shadow of the black walls hearing, as he went, the groans of some poor wretch whom he left behind.

One in the country, he passed irresolutely, not knowing which way to take. He was still hesitating, when a carriage drove past him quickly, stopped a little beyond, and then came back.

He had not looked up before, but the sudden cessation of the sound of carriage wheels on the road, and the return of the whole, startled his curiosity, and he glanced at its occupants with some surprise.

He recognized the gentleman at once as James de Lacy, and the young girl seated beside him he guessed to be his daughter.

Madeline de Lacy's face was just the one a man would desire upon when he was in trouble. Pure and sweet, with earnest eyes, shaded by long dark lashes, which contrasted prettily with the golden brown of her hair, she struck even the most casual observer as a woman to love, and trust, and reverence devoutly.

Giving the reins into his daughter's hands, Mr. de Lacy jumped down, and came up to Captain Vane.

"I am lucky to have met you," said the old man, with a quiet smile; "for they told me the trial would not be over until four o'clock, and it is now nearly three. Madeline and myself quite intended to be in court to hear the verdict, never doubting but that they would acquit you, and being anxious to show our sense of the cruel injustice of the accusation."

Captain Vane had had an unreasoning prejudice against Mr. de Lacy, but at these words, so kindly spoken, so infinitely grateful to him in his loneliness and desolation, his heart began to soften, and the tears came into his dim eyes.

"You are very good," he answered, brokenly, "and I feel your goodness the more that I am conscious how little I merit anything of the sort at your hands."

"Let bygones be bygones," said Mr. de Lacy, with a gentle air. "If you think me capable of bearing malice for a few rash words, spoken in the heat of fever, you wrong me indeed. So lightly did I judge you, Captain Vane, that I never even mentioned the circumstance to my daughter, in whom I have the most entire confidence. But actions speak louder than words, and I will prove my sincerity by asking you to come and share our humble home, and such poor comfort as we can offer you. Madeline and I have committed together, and are mutually of opinion that, after all you have gone through, you require perfect rest for a while, and I can promise you this under our roof, if you consent to become our guest."

The offer was such a surprise to Captain Vane that he said, in spite of himself, "I am quite overcome by your kindness, Mr. de Lacy, feeling that I have no claim even to ordinary consideration at your hands."

"Nay, every one who has been unjustly and ill-used has a claim upon his friends, you forget that. Winifred's poor mother, and the poor child who was taken so early and so sadly from the midst of us."

"Has it struck you, Mr. de Lacy, that I might prejudice you in the world if I become an inmate of your house?"

"A fig for that!" he exclaimed, with generous enthusiasm. "I am much too old, and I hope, too wise, to care what the world says or thinks."

"But your daughter?"

"My daughter and I are always of one opinion. Madeline, my dear!"

She turned her fair, beaming face toward them.

"Yes, papa."

"Captain Vane seems to fancy that you may object to the arrangement I propose."

"Then it shows he does not know me, papa—that is all," he answered, readily. "I believe it was my own position in the first instance, was it not?"

"No it was, my dear. I heartily beg your pardon for forgetting. Captain Vane, you will not deny it after this?"

The young officer had it in his heart to say, "I will, eternally and curdily, for this man was, in spite of all, Winifred's poor murderer, but, looking at his benevolent face, and recollecting how desolate and despaired he was, he saw the Christian charity that prompted these two to offer him the shelter of their home and name until the crisis was past, and he decided to accept."

But, first of all, he considered it his duty to draw Mr. de Lacy on one side, and say, "I think it right to tell you, sir, that my one object in life is to discover Winifred's

destroyer; and that even living under your roof, and partaking of your hospitality, I would denounce you at once, without a moment's hesitation, if I discovered you to be the man. Will you take me on these terms?"

Mr. de Lacy appeared to hesitate for a moment, and then he said, "Certainly, why not? I can trust you, I am sure, as a gentleman, and to pursue your investigations in such a way as to prejudice me in my household, or excite any suspicion in my daughter's mind, is noisier to me than my very life, and has been my cherished ambition ever since she could speak. It would break my heart if she were taught to think ill of me!"

"Under any possible circumstances, I should be incapable of such a cruel act."

Mr. de Lacy extended his hand, with a cordial smile.

"I see you understand each other, Captain Vane. I have no reason to dread your scrutiny, or even denigrate it, beyond this, and I repeat, unhesitatingly, that if you will condescend to make our home your home until your health is completely re-established, both Madeline and myself will be very happy to see you."

"I am greatly indebted to you for your offer," replied the young officer, with grave courtesy; "and I accept it as frankly as it was made, on the conditions I made just now. I am aware that it appears singular to insist upon this, but I must be faithful to my one purpose, even if I am unfaithful to myself."

"What is your purpose?" inquired Mr. de Lacy, slowly.

"To discover the man who killed Winifred, and bring him to justice."

Mr. de Lacy stopped to give his daughter a nod and a smile before he answered. "I should fancy your task would be a difficult one."

"Why?"

"Because he appears hitherto to have evaded suspicion so cleverly, and left no trace that might lead to his discovery."

"Pardon me, you are wrong there. I am not starting on my search entirely without a guide."

Mr. de Lacy started violently, and uttered a sharp cry, darting toward the carriage as he did so.

"Oh, Madeline—my dear, dear child!" Captain Vane heard him say, "how could you frighten me so terribly?"

"What, papa?"

"I thought the pony was going to run away."

"I don't believe he had any intention of the kind. He was only lashing his tail to keep off the flies."

"But you hold the reins so loosely, my love!"

"Because I have such perfect confidence in Brownie's discretion, papa. I am sure that nothing earthly would tempt him to run away."

"He looked very like it," gasped her father.

Madeline laughed a laugh of silver and pearls.

"What a dear, nervous old darling you are!"

"Supposing Brownie did run away—what then?"

"You might be killed!"

"Since poor Winifred's death, you have been so nervous about me," said Madeline, her eyes dropping, and a shadow of pain coming over the tranquil beauty of her face, "and you know I have been no more nervous since I was born."

He stooped down and kissed her, with a face of such absorbing, passionate love, that it was a wonder to see.

"I hope you may keep so always, my darling. You deserve all the good that can come to you."

"I am not at all afraid of that."

She shook her head as he went back to Captain Vane, and her gentle smile followed him like a blessing.

He apologized politely for his sudden departure.

"I interrupted you, too, at a very interesting part of the conversation," he added. "You were telling me that you had something to your possession which would enable you to trace the murderer of my unfortunate kinswoman. Am I not right?"

"I did not go quite so far as that. I merely said that I was not starting on my search entirely without a guide."

"Ah! that was it. I beg your pardon for not remembering your exact words, but my daughter started me so much, everything went out of my head but her."

"She did not appear to be in any danger, either."

"You see how foolish we fathers can be, Captain Vane. The pony whisked its tail and I flew to the rescue as anxiously as if I had not seen him do the same thing a thousand times. But she is my only one, and that must plead as my excuse."

"Surely there can be no excuse needed," said Captain Vane.

"I don't know; it must look very absurd to outsiders. But about these proofs you possess?" he asked, abruptly. "Are they at all conclusive?"

"I think so."

Mr. de Lacy stroked his white beard with a reflective air.

"I am afraid it would be impertinent to inquire what they were."

"I prefer to keep silence for the present," returned the captain. "There are many reasons why it is best."

was a charming companion, and managed Brownie with perfect grace and skill.

It was strange to Captain Vane to find himself that night sleeping under the roof of a man whom he had denounced his enemy. He opened the window the last thing, and looked out on the moonlit lawn, with a kind of wonder of himself, and of everything.

Then suddenly the tide of bitter memories became too strong for him, and bowing his head on the sill, he wept about, crying out, in the anguish of his heart, "Oh, my darling, my darling! how can I live without thee!"

The moon of the wind amongst the tall trees was his only answer—until, presently, he heard a cry that seemed like the echo of his own, and a wild shadow fled across the lawn and disappeared into the darkness beyond, like some perturbed spirit.

He waited a minute to wonder who this could be that haunted the moon so strangely, and hushed his own sobs to listen. But all was quiet again, until the stiff wind came sighing to his ear once more, bringing the blank silence with its eerie cry.

He shut down the window then, and threw himself across the bed; but in the dead of the night, when the house was hushed in repose, he heard a cautious step creep past his door, and was still trying to account for this circumstance when sleep came suddenly on his tired eyes, and he thought no more.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 2.)

## THE

### Bandits of the Prairie.

A TALE OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER.

(CONCLUDED.)

BY T. J. CHAMBERS.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

##### AN EXCITING CHASE.

"That cursed medicine-man has returned to his tricks and expects them to be successful," George Stanhope said, to remain the village and return with his savage warriors in so short a time."

"I told you he was the devil, but you would not believe me," said Jack Lewis.

"I will admit that he is a devil in human shape, and I pray Heaven we may never see him again," said Captain Carroll, looking back at his band of followers.

The rangers all replied in the affirmative.

"Then be ready to let drive another volley into the midst of yonder howling demons when I give the word. Don't fire till I tell you then get within good range."

"How far is this cave from here?"

"I cannot tell exactly, in the darkness—probably a half-hour's ride."

And the red-shirts will be on us again before fifteen miles. Boys, did you see that?" asked Captain Carroll, looking back at his band of followers.

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"I know it—but the night is well advanced—we can reach our ranch by daylight, and there we can easily defend ourselves against the savages, if they follow us that far."

"And what will become of the poor little girl, your sister?" asked the hunter, pityingly.

"God pity her!" murmured Myra Lewis. "She must—she shall be rescued from the power of that villain!" exclaimed Walter Darrell.

"Amos to that, stranger," returned Jack Lewis. "I'm not again to give up till I see that Juan swings from a tree, and the girl safe back in her home."

"I think the Indians have abandoned the pursuit," continued Darrell. "But no great Heaven! listen to these cries—they are coming again."

"Well, we'll pepper 'em again—that's all," said the old hunter, smiling.

"Ride, boys, for your lives!" shouted Captain Carroll's cheerful voice.

The rangers needed no urging. They were very well that it was a race for life or death, and they galloped their tired horses forward mercilessly. The Camanches were a long distance behind, and they appeared to gain on the fugitives very slowly. The race continued in this manner for many miles, the Indians gaining gradually on the whites. The night was nearly gone; a faint grayish light appeared in the east, betokening the approach of morning. Our friends halted this with delight, for they felt certain that their enemies would abandon the chase as soon as daylight appeared.

"Hurry!" shouted Captain Carroll. "If we can only hang on awhile longer we shall be out of danger. We must be nearing Stanhope's ranch—eh, Carlos?"

"We are nearing the cave of the bandits—Stanhope's house is three or four miles further on," replied Carlos.

"We will be between two fires, should the Camanches follow us that far," continued the ranger.

"There were none of the men at the cave except Juan, when I left," replied Carlos.

"And if he hears us coming, he will doubtless make good his word."

"I fear so, but he can scarcely get away with the girl unseen."

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certed. The bandits had made their escape in good time.

"We are wasting time by searching here," said Carlos. "I know every nook and corner of the cave, and I am certain that there is no one concealed within it."

"Then lead the way on in fast as possible," replied the ranger.

In a few moments they emerged into the open air, where their friends awaited them anxiously.

"Where are the bandits now gone?" asked Captain Carroll, in answer to some one's inquiry.

"Far away!" murmured Mr. Stanhope, hesitatingly.

"We shall overtake them yet, before they get across the border—for without doubt they have started for Mexico," said Carlos. "Wait a moment, till I see if the horses are all gone."

Carlos walked to the mouth of the cave, which had been used as a stable, and entered. In a moment he returned, with intelligence that not an animal remained.

"What direction do you think Juan has taken?" asked the captain of the rangers.

"Southwest," replied Carlos. "He has crossed the creek at this point, and we can easily strike his trail on the other bank. I think they will try to drive the horses into Mexico before them, and if so, we can easily overtake them."

"We must start in pursuit at once," said Captain Carroll, "but we cannot all go. Our horses are too weary to carry double any further, and we must travel with all possible speed. How far is your home from here, Mr. Stanhope?"

"Not much more than three miles, I think," replied Mr. Stanhope.

"Then I propose that you, or your son, with Mr. Darrell and Miss Lewis, make your way there, while the rest of us go in pursuit of the bandits. We have not horses enough for all, and should there be fighting to do, my men are better trained to such business than you."

"I shall go with you if I have to walk," said Walter Darrell.

"I will change places with you—you can take my horse," volunteered one of the rangers.

"All right—let us be going at once," replied Darrell.

They walked back to the spot where they had left their horses, and forded the wide, shallow stream.

This accomplished, George Stanhope, Miss Lewis, and one of the rangers, dismounted, and bade farewell to the rest of the party.

"Good-bye, father—Walter," said George. "I would like to assist in the rescue of my sister, but in the present state of affairs I would only be an encumbrance."

"There are enough of us without you, my boy," replied Mr. Stanhope. "We cannot both go, and a father's affection is stronger than a brother's. Hasten home to your heart-broken mother—tell her that, God willing, our lost darling shall be restored to safety. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, little girl," said Jack Lewis, laying his hand tenderly upon his daughter's head.

"Good-bye, father," replied the girl, with tearful eyes.

"Lead on, Carlos," cried Captain Carroll, impatiently. "Let us find the trail, and be off."

"Follow me," answered Carlos, urging his horse into an easy gallop.

"The trail of the bandits was easily found and followed. It led for two or three miles in a southerly direction, and at length diverged to the westward; and here the ground was much trampled and torn, as if a herd of buffalo had recently passed over it."

"What does this mean?" asked the leader of the rangers.

"It means," replied Carlos, "that the herdman have collected all the cattle together at this point, and they are now driving them toward Mexico."

"The second ride," exclaimed Mr. Stanhope. "They would rob me of my child and wealth at one blow."

"But they will fall in both, and get their necks stretched in the bargain," said Captain Carroll.

"I hope they will meet the reward of their actions, but I fear we cannot overtake them."

"You needn't be alarmed, Mr. Stanhope," said Jack Lewis, "for if my eyes don't fool me I see a glimpse of the rascals about another mile or so."

"You are right, Lewis," said Carroll. "I see a vast herd of cattle, with several horsemen riding behind—doubtless they are the men we are after."

"They are moving slowly—they are not yet aware of our approach," remarked Carlos.

"We will rush upon them like a hurricane," cried Carroll, exultantly. "Boys, have your revolvers out, but don't kill the scoundrels if you can help it—we want to have the fun of hanging a dozen or so of them."

"Go ahead, captain, there's enough of us to take 'em alive," said Jack Lewis, exultantly. "They have learnt a lesson all men—learned to fear, and rather reckon they won't bother white folks again for a long time."

"Do you think they have really abandoned the chase?" asked George Stanhope.

"Yes, sir, I am certain of it; we needn't be afraid of them now," returned Lewis.

In a short time our friends arrived at the banks of Silver Creek. They descended to the edge of the water at the ford, a hundred yards below the retreat of the bandits, and here, at the suggestion of Carlos, they left their horses, and approached the mouth of the cave on foot.

"We must be very cautious," said Carlos, who led the way. "Let five or six men follow me into the cave, while the rest remain outside."

"I will go with you," said Captain Carroll. "And I," said Walter Darrell. "Indeed, every man was eager to enter the dark retreat, but Carroll selected three of his men, and they, with Lewis and Darrell, followed Carlos into the cave."

"Have your revolvers ready," said Carlos, as he passed to strike a light.



a trial," remonstrated Juan, although he knew that he was talking in vain.

"You have had a trial, you scoundrel—the only trial we shall give you, except when we allow you to try the strength of that rope," thundered Captain Carrol.

"Boys, I think we are ready—have you the noose fixed in a proper way?"

"The ropes are all right, captain," replied Jack Lewis, who had been attending to this matter.

"Then place them around the necks of the prisoners."

Lewis was about to obey this command, when a strange incident occurred. With a fearful howl, a man rushed from among the trees, and threw himself savagely upon the astonished Carrol. It was the medicine-man of the Camanches.

His dress, composed of all the fiery that barbaric fancy could suggest, was blood-stained and dusty; and the blood flowed in a purple stream from a wound in his shoulder. He was arrayed in all the glory of the hideous war-paint; but about his shoulders and breast it was rubbed off, revealing a skin white and delicate.

"What does this mean?" cried Captain Carrol, feeling something like fear in his bosom.

"It is the devil—no human being could come to life after being shot the way he was," said Lewis.

Meanwhile Gonzalez, bound hand and foot, was being roughly used by the strange medicine-man. He could offer no resistance to the blows that were rained upon him, but he managed to cry out—

"In the name of the Great Spirit, who are you?"

"One who will have your heart's blood," Gonzalez Valaquez said the pretended Indian, fiercely. "You never expected to see me again, did you? You left me for dead in a Mexican forest, but I did not die—I have spent years in a vain search for you, but I have found you at last!"

"Henry Neville!" gasped Gonzalez Valaquez.

"Yes, I was Henry Neville once, but now I am the great medicine-man of the Camanches. Whoop!"

The new-comer relaxed his grasp of the hideous and leaping to his feet, commenced dancing around among the frightened rangers, yelling in a horrible manner. The hardy frontiersmen shrank back at his approach, and several grasped their hunting-knives.

"Barely this man, if he is a man at all, is possessed of the devil," said Captain Carrol.

"He is mad," replied Walter Darrell.

"You can see the fire of insanity in his eyes."

"Mad, am I? Who says I am mad?" yelled the medicine-man, springing furiously toward the rangers, and drawing a knife from his belt. Carrol also grasped his hunting-knife, but ere he could use it his antagonist snatched it from his hand, uttering a wild laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha! you don't know how to use knives," he shouted. "I will show you a little trick with these blades—look here. The man who is really mad is the one who stepped back a few paces, and raising one of the knives to his mouth, deliberately swallowed it, with hideous groans and convulsions of rage."

"You see the power of the Great Spirit," he cried, swallowing, or pretending to swallow, the other knife in a similar manner.

The rangers, who had never witnessed any feat of jugglery or sleight of hand, were greatly terrified, and regarded the madman with a mixture of horror and awe.

"The saints preserve us!" murmured one, crossing himself devoutly.

"The Lord have mercy on us!" cried Jack Lewis.

Darrell explained to the men that the medicine-man of the Camanches, instead of being the devil, was merely a common juggler, and that his tricks were performed without the aid of any supernatural agency.

"If that's so, the rascal shall hang along with these other villains," said Lewis.

"Hang!" roared the madman, "who says hang? You attempted to hang me once, but you shall never do it again. There! Quick as lightning, the madman sprang upon the old hunter, and plunged a knife into his side. With a low groan, Lewis fell to the ground, while his murderer uttered a yell of triumph.

"Die, dog! thus perish all the enemies of the Camanches!"

"Seize him!" cried Walter Darrell.

"The man has method in his madness, and he must be restrained."

"Aye, he shall hang, and that quickly," said Captain Carrol, when the madman was overpowered and bound.

"Mad or not, human or devil, he shall swing for what he has just now done. Men, get ready another rope."

In a moment a rope was ready, and Carrol adjusted the noose around the madman's neck.

"Must this really be done?" asked Darrell.

"Yes, sir, it's got to be done," answered the ranger firmly. "It will be useless for you to say a word against it, for these three scoundrels have seen their last hour upon earth. Men, put the ropes around the necks of the bandits."

The rangers hastened to obey, for they were nearly all anxious to witness the execution. With a shudder, Walter Darrell turned away, and walked to the spot where Mr. Stanhope and the two females were standing. The latter gazed upon the scene with horror, but Mr. Stanhope was calm and unmoved.

"Let them hang," he said. "Their doom, although terrible, is a just retribution for their crimes."

"Oh, Heaven, I cannot bear the sight!" said Louisa, turning toward her lover.

Darrell threw his arms around his sweet-heart, and drew her head down upon his shoulder.

"It seems horrible, I know, but it is just," he said. "Don't look up, my darling—it will soon be over."

The ropes were adjusted around the necks of the prisoners. Carrol stationed three or four men to try the ropes, ready to haul up when he gave the order.

"Prisoners, stand upon your feet," said the ranger in a loud voice. "Now, if any of you have anything to say, be quick, your time is short."

Juan and Gonzalez maintained a sullen silence, although the latter looked frequently toward his wife, as if he would implore her aid; but the terribly-wounded woman sat with her head bowed upon her hands, and spoke no word in his behalf.

When he found the rope around his neck, the strange medicine-man of the Camanches seemed to recover his reason. He looked boldly around at his stern executioners, and said, in a loud, clear voice, in which could be detected no quiver of fear—

"The hour of my end is come, and I am ready. I do not wish to live longer—but before I die I wish to explain the causes which led me to adopt my present mode of life. I was born to wealth sufficient for all my wants, and was thus enabled to indulge every whim and fancy. I had a passion for travel, and for scientific re-

searches; and when a young man of twenty, I made a tour through Mexico. There I met the beautiful being who changed the current of my life—she appeared in my heart a passion little short of madness. Had I married Juan Carasco, I might have made a useful and honorable man. But she was carried away from me by this devil in human shape, Gonzalez Valaquez; and I was left lying bleeding and almost dead in the lonely forest. When I recovered consciousness, my brain seemed to be on fire. The love which had filled my soul seemed to be blotted out; I had but one thought, one desire, and that was revenge—revenge upon the author of my misery. I sought for him in nearly every part of Mexico, but all in vain; I have never seen the face of the villain from that day until the present time. My reason became dethroned—at times I have been raving mad; and the sight of that devil's face brought on one of the paroxysms. In my wanderings I have been an expert hunter of jaguars and a sleight of hand, and this knowledge has saved my life more than once. Several years ago, I fell into the hands of the Camanches, and was about to be put to death, but the performance of some of my tricks convinced the savages that I was an expert hunter of jaguars and a sleight of hand, and they at once installed me medicine-man of the tribe. The wild life of the Indians suited me exactly; I remained among them willingly, and became the most powerful man of the tribe. I was more savage and bloodthirsty even than the Camanches. I waged continual war with the whites, and I never spared the life of a captive. The sight of blood, of the torture and death-agonies of others, has been my delight; but my career is ended at last. I have no fear of death; I rejoice at its near approach. Do your duty, men—and let Gonzalez Valaquez and Henry Neville and their lives at the same moment."

As Neville ceased speaking, a wild shriek pierced the air, and Inez Valaquez fell forward upon her face in a swoon. A curious change passed over Neville's face as he heard that cry. His eyes glared, his muscles twitched, he ground his teeth together, and frothed at the mouth.

"Ha, ha!" he cried, "I know that voice—it is Inez—Inez, whom I once loved, but whom I now hate, as I hate everything upon earth—ha, ha!"

Mr. Stanhope walked to Captain Carrol's side, and said in low tones:

"I ask you to spare this man's life. He was once that poor woman's lover, and I fear she cannot endure the shock of his death."

Carrol reflected a moment, and then turned to Neville, and said:

"If you will promise never to go among the Indians again," he said, "I will let you go free—not for your own sake, but for the sake of others."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the prisoner. "Never go among the Indians again? Why, I am the medicine-man of the Camanches! If you spare my life, I will join them at once—I will murder, burn, destroy everything that comes in my way—I will exterminate the white race from the earth. Whoop!"

"To release this man would be to cause the murder of many innocent persons," said Captain Carrol, then, turning to the men who held the ropes, he cried:

"Boys, string them up!"

The rangers pulled on the ropes with a will; the bodies of the three prisoners swung in the air. In a few moments their struggles ceased, and all was over.

"We will let them hang till evening, when we will send some men back to bury them," said Captain Carrol, calmly.

"Now, Mr. Stanhope, lead the way to your house, where we must carry poor Lewis. He is not dead, but I fear mortally wounded. If we God pity this pretty daughter, we will attempt to describe the joyful meeting between mother and daughter, sisters and sisters. Inez Valaquez was warmly welcomed to her sister's home, where she enjoyed peace and rest, if not happiness."

The old hunter, Jack Lewis, did not die. He slowly recovered from his wound, and was able to sit in a chair and witness the three weddings which shortly took place at Mr. Stanhope's residence—George Stanhope and Myra Lewis, Eugene Layton and Annie Stanhope, and Walter Darrell and beautiful, warm-hearted Louisa. Captain Carrol and his rangers were present at the wedding festivities, which were carried on in true frontier style.

Walter Darrell carried his lovely young wife to his home in New Orleans, where her beauty and virtues rendered her a great favorite in society. Every autumn the happy couple pay a long visit to a beautiful cattle ranch in Texas, where they first met and loved each other.

Carlos was true to his resolve to lead a better life. He remained in Mr. Stanhope's employ, and became his chief herdman. The rest of the bandits were seen no more in Texas, and it was thought that they found in Mexico a more congenial field for the exercise of their peculiar abilities.

THE END.

A New Calling.

There are certain ambitions but very impracticable young men who are ever on the alert for helpless old ladies at crossings in London streets. The tradition is that it may happen a fortune may come out of a little act of courtesy. Old ladies in London are regarded as fairly godmothers. But a new edition of these street romances has just been published. Young ladies have a chance as well as young men. It appears that not long ago a blind man was crossing Regent street with a dog, and was in immediate danger of being run over by a rapid carriage. A young lady, setting on the impulse of random kindness, rushed forward, gave the blind man a violent push, which sent him flying, but saved his life. The heroic act was witnessed by a wealthy old bachelor passing at the time, who managed to get introduced, proposed, and finally married the pious young lady. Ever since that date other young ladies have waited eagerly at the crossings to fall in with a similar fate. They have dodged blind beggars all over London, and ogled a likely-looking bachelor. They have prayed for an opportunity of exercising their presence of mind and saving their fortune. Thus, by the by, is all very well for the ladies, but it is rather a bore for the beggars. A fall is better than death, but there may be some where the tumble might altogether be dispensed with.

WOULD BE FOOLISH.—Several conceited young men were assembled on a street corner, when a poor Dutchman approached. One of them said to his companions—

"Boys, I'm going to have some fun; just watch this fellow Dutchy."

He went up to the German, to whom he said—

"Kaiser, don't you want to buy a dog?"

The person thus addressed quickly responded—

"Y-a-a, I just want to buy a little peppy, about your size. Are you for sale?"

## MY AUNT'S SILK DRESS.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"Item. To my niece and namesake, Clara Harlowe, I give and bequeath my blue silk dress. May it bring her good fortune."

Is that all? sighed my mother—when father, who had been to the funeral, and afterward heard the will, had told us. "Is that all she has left the child who was named for her?"

"I did not name her Clara to induce her aunt to make her an heiress," said my father somewhat reprovingly, as he left the room.

"No, of course not," my mother went on, "but still I always did think Clara would leave you something worth while. She had plenty of property, and no one belonging to her but your father and his family, and now she has gone and left it all to this young Macdonald, son of her cousin, who had long wanted to marry him herself, and she told him that Clara was false, and had gone off with another man. Meaning that your father had brought her home with him. Well, he believed it all, and the girl played her part so well, that she thought she was all right in the world, and married her there and then, while poor Clara, who left us bright and happy in the thought of her approaching marriage, reached home in time to hear that Captain Macdonald and his bride had sailed for Europe."

"It made a great change in Clara," my mother continued. "She grew very quiet and reserved, and people called her odd. I should think she was, from her will."

"But what became of Captain Macdonald and his wife?" asked.

"In less than two years she died, and he came home bringing his baby with him. Folks thought then that it would all be made up between him and Clara, and perhaps it might have been, but he was hardly landed before he was taken sick, and died in a few days."

"And didn't Aunt Clara ever see him again?" I inquired with much interest.

"Just before he died, she heard of his sickness, your father told me this, for he was in New York at the time, and she made him go with her to see Captain Macdonald. Your father said the poor little baby sat on the bed by his father, who seemed as if he could not die and leave him. He had found out the truth about Clara, and after the first meeting was over, he begged her to take his child."

"At first she seemed to be thinking of the matter, and didn't make much answer, but presently the little fellow began to laugh and cry, and stretch out his arms to her. He looked just like his father, and she couldn't hold out any longer. She just took him up, and promised he should never wait, and a few minutes later Captain Macdonald died, with his head on her arm."

"I never saw her again. She seemed to dread to come here, where she was last so happy. She has taken care of that child ever since, and now—"

And now she has left her fortune to him, and I think she has done quite right, I exclaimed. "Supposing we are not rich as we used to be, mother, we can live very comfortably, and I certainly think my aunt's adopted son had a greater claim upon her than we had."

My mother only replied with a sigh, and the subject dropped.

In due time my legacy came home. It was a delicate blue silk, with what seemed to be a curiously twisting gold vine running over it, but which proved on closer examination to be the letters R and C, twisted together in every conceivable manner.

"That was to be her wedding-dress," said my mother. "She brought it here to show me. Captain Macdonald brought it home to her. He had the silk made, and the initials of their names, Robert and Clara, woven in it."

"What a strange fancy," I said, gently stroking the silk which seemed to mean so much now, and I folded it and laid it carefully away in my trunk.

Two years had passed, and one evening I was dressing to attend a wedding party. Hattie Stacy, my most special friend and confidante, was with me. We had arranged each other's hair, and I had helped her finish dressing, and now commenced my own toilet.

"Just look in that trunk for my fan, will you, Hattie?" I asked, as I went toward the closet to get my dress.

Hattie complied, and after a few moments rummaging, and many exclamations of admiration, she drew forth—my legacy.

"Oh, Clara, you wretched creature, how dare you think of wearing that white thing when you have this lovely blue silk! See how it flashes in the light! Put it on this moment!"

"Put it on! Why, Hattie, you are crazy! It was made for my aunt before I was born. We are not going to attend a wedding."

"Must true, fair lady," she answered, slyly. "Nevertheless, if you will deign to turn your eyes this way, you will see that 'this relic of bygone days' is made almost exactly in accordance with the present fashion, and before I could prevent her she had thrown the dress over my shoulders, and was deftly proceeding to arrange it."

It was really strange, but fashion, as it sometimes does, had repeated itself, and the dress, in all respects, looked as if just made. It fitted too, marvellously well, and I knew, as I glanced at myself in the dressing glass, that Hattie was right when she said it was perfect.

"Now, take it off as quickly as you can, or we shall be late!" I said.

"Take it off! Not! You must wear it, Clara. You'll be the belle of the evening, and eclipse us all. Must not we wear it, Mrs. Harlowe?" she continued, addressing my mother, who had just entered.

"Certainly she must! Clara, my darling, how much you look as your aunt did at your age? I should really like you to wear that dress this evening."

Thus I felt constrained, and to hide the sadness that crept over me as I thought of what occasion it had been made, I said, jestingly—

"Perhaps I may find the good fortune Aunt Clara wished me," and hurrying down stairs, we left the house under my brother's escort.

The wedding was an unusually brilliant one for our little village, and the bride-

groom had brought with him many of his city friends.

Several times in the course of the evening I had caught the dark eyes of one of the guests fastened upon me, and at last my hostess, approaching with him, introduced him—but in the noise and confusion I lost the name.

He was a tall, dark, somewhat reserved-looking young man—and this very reserve made a certain friendliness that he infused into his manner the more striking. Feeling no occasion for it, I rather resented it, and maintained a cool dignity, till on raising my eyes as I answered some question, they suddenly fell on his neck tie. To my extreme astonishment it was like my dress. Yes, there it was, the same blue silk! There were the curiously wrought initials! Where could he have become possessed of it? With any ordinary silk of course it might happen, but this!

My companion saw my look of wonder, and answered by saying, "I see that you are not familiarly acquainted with me, and I observed it when you entered the room, and therefore requested an introduction. Am I right in believing that you are the niece of Miss Clara Harlowe of New York?"

"Yes," I answered, "and you are—"

"Robert Macdonald, her adopted son. I was, as you perhaps know, absent in Europe at the time of her death, and when I arrived at home her lawyer told me that her bequests had all been attended to, and everything was settled, so I gave no further attention to the will, than to take possession of that which she had bequeathed me."

"It was but a week or two ago that in turning over a drawer of old papers, I found a sealed envelope addressed to me. On opening it this scarf and a letter appeared. In the letter your aunt desired me to seek the owner of a dress like the scarf. No name was given of where she was. I went to the lawyer, who could not help me, until a sudden thought striking me, I called for a copy of the will, and finding therein the mention of a blue silk dress, I determined to come here as soon as my duties would allow. Just then my friend invited me to his wedding, and I came with a double object, but not hoping to be so soon successful."

"I have never worn my dress until to-night," I stammered, hardly knowing what to say.

"Nor I my scarf," he rejoined. "It is certainly a remarkable coincidence. May I have the pleasure?" he inquired, offering his arm as the Lancers were called.

We danced and walked and talked together, till Hattie privately accused me of being an outrageous flirt. Thereupon I introduced him to her, and in the midst of an animated conversation she uttered a cry of astonishment as she noticed his scarf.

Of course more explanations ensued. "If I am to be an object of universal attention on account of my scarf," he observed laughingly, "I shall be obliged to retire from the room, and another had to be found."

Just then my brother approached, with, "It's time to go home, girls."

"Take pity on me, Miss Harlowe," said Mr. Macdonald, after I had introduced them, "and allow me to escort you home, for my modesty will no longer allow me to stand there, and see you have a religion, and what it was—a matter which the discussion on 'the authority of the Scriptures and the antiquity of man' had probably left in some doubt."

Whether Clara or Miss Priscilla considered it necessary for him to have a religion, or necessary for him not to have a religion, we are unable to say. In either case, however, we are inclined to think that her biographer does not depict her character with strict accuracy.

But the issue is that no engagement resulted beyond a tacit engagement to correspond with each other, and see how they mutually are off in the matter of attributes. Our readers remember probably the anecdote of the sea captain and his lady-love.

"You love me, captain," says the lady, "because I possess certain feminine attributes—beyond a tacit engagement to correspond with each other, and see how they mutually are off in the matter of attributes."

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"I love you—but dash your attributes! But these young lovers were very different sort of people."

We hope we are not considering this little volume too much from a humorous point of view, for these letters which pass between Clara and Clara, make us almost think that their names really are, after all, Julius and Clara, and not Nebemish and Priscilla—there is so much that is true and tender and well-said in them. One, perhaps (the great question discussed in them, is the possibility of educated and refined people living in married life in a manner suitable to their spiritual and material needs on a small income.

Miss Preston rather shrinks the issue, for she gives Clara a little fortune of seven thousand dollars with which to piece out her husband's slender salary. Of course Julius says, "He is above touching it," and that a woman's patrimony ought to be sacred. But if Clara were the sensible and honest woman we take her to be, she would see that if the law no longer gave the wife's fortune to the husband as in old times, it would be a very mean thing in her not to devote her money as he did his, to their common interests and support.

And besides, though the experiment of "aesthetic" living began by Julius and Clara, "in three rooms," is depicted by the author, at the end of two years, as being highly successful—nothing is said of her not to devote her money as he did his, to their common interests and support.

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struggle as he would to widen the space, man can, at any time, go further from earth than the thickness of a sheet of paper.



## "WHERE ARE THEY NOW?"

BY ELIZA COOK.

The two were seated with their backs to the fire, and the old man, with his head bowed, was looking at the floor. But when he looked up, he saw the young man's face, and he started. "Where are they now?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Where are they now?" he asked, in a low voice.

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"Where are they now?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Where are they now?" he asked, in a low voice.

## THE MYSTERY OF TRENDLEDEEP MANOR.

BY PERCY R. ST. JOHN.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A PRETTY PLACE.

The Signorina della Rocca had not travelled on the Continent, and lived amidst the peace and quietude of her own country, but she was not ignorant of the world, and she was not ignorant of the world.

"I only asked a question," she said, in a low voice.

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and brought me up from childhood as his pet and glory.

"He may have been good to you—he was bad to me," was the cruel answer.

"He never spoke against my mother, except to my own now and then, and Heaven forgive her for her cruel desertion!"

"Girl, you have told me that before, but it cannot be. If I have done wrong, if I have brought a life which otherwise had been bright and happy, there is no forgiveness for me; but no, no—I see—I heard—that is enough. Let me speak of the captain."

"By all means. He is a friend of Cecil Mordaunt," she added, slyly.

"Ah! that name again! Then he must know you," faltered the signorina.

"Not at all. He never saw me except once or twice when I was nursing Cecil, and he has no certain recollection of me whatever."

"No judge the young, especially when they are deeply preoccupied."

"So much the better, but do not mention that fatal name of Mordaunt again."

"Is it not my own?" said Lucilla, innocently.

"Heaven!" said the woman, as if struck a violent blow, "who breathed that thought into your ear? Mordaunt! against the name—away with the thought! Who dared tell you that?"

"I only asked a question."

"Ask it not again, and now, child, to bed, and do not disturb your head with silly fancies. I was two years older than you are I thought of love."

And so neither daughter parted: the one to rest, the other to watch.

This strange and apparently accidental remark made by her daughter had alarmed her more than she liked to confess.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SOMEbody ABOUT LONDON.

The loss of his child appeared to inflict upon Mr. Meriton a shock that threatened his reason. The blow was sudden and unexpected, was struck with such force, such secrecy and suddenness, no provision of his could have warded it off.

Heaven knows he had not concealed himself for that purpose. Mr. Meriton had no fear of this kind, except from the wanton intrusion of bad men, against whom, however, he felt his child was shielded.

He had quite another source of alarm. For many years, ever since he had the consolation of his daughter's presence—he had lived in the constant dread of an enemy as cunning as the serpent, as fall as the tiger, as remorseless as the lifeless car of Juggernaut that passes heedless over its victims, insensible to groans and cries.

This fear made him live in retirement, he ever on the watch, change his residence, have no friends, than all of the name of Mordaunt above all, and lead the life of a recluse.

His daughter's eloquence—which at first he feared had been a little too strong—quite paralyzed him for some days.

Then life and strength came back under the nursing care of the middle-aged attendant who waited on him in his obscure lodgings in London, where he lived when away from his daughter's residence, and where he issued only to attend to his business.

He had, mainly by the assistance of Hal Thaxar, or rather John Haldane himself a misanthrope, suspicious of men, and slightly affected by the madness of believing himself capable of regaining society, established a most extensive and lucrative shipping business in the city, which brought in large returns.

His presence was only required now and then, as there were efficient clerks. He now went only for one hour. The rest of his time was wholly employed in searching for his daughter.

For peculiar reasons he could not, or rather, dared not, employ the assistance of the police. There was a feature in his life which he dreaded inquiry into with a fear which surpassed all understanding.

But his love for his daughter was above every other consideration.

It was the one great bliss of his existence, for she was as the apple of his eye.

Men are fond of sons, and love them, too, but scarcely with the intense sentiment which characterizes a father's love for a daughter.

As soon as he was out in the morning he was on his way, here and there and everywhere, in search of her; in every likely and unlikely place.

In the middle of the day again, and then, at last, at night.

He would visit theatres, music-halls—all kinds of places of amusement and amusement. He would go round to fashionable and unfashionable quarters of the town. It was during one of the former expeditions that Cecil saw him, as he came out of Hubert Mordaunt's house.

And he saw Cecil leave that mansion, and conceived therefrom an aversion for the youth which would not easily be eradicated.

It was his habit of an evening to doff the clothes which he wore in business and when meeting people he knew in respectable circles, and dress himself shabbily. He had, too, a slouching hat, and a heavy greatcoat, which served the purpose of a disguise.

His journeys, after a day or so, became mechanical. He went in and out, round about, glancing at every girl of about the age and age of Cecil, with keen and scrutinizing eyes, but he never saw one in any way resembling her.

One evening he had pursued a young lady for the length of a street, and been soundly rebuffed for so doing, though she was like his darling. Exhausted, disappointed, and overcome, he satured an obscure, out-of-the-way public house in search of refreshment.

There was a seat near the bar in which he sank, and asked for brandy and water, at the same time taking off his hat to wipe his heated and burning forehead.

The landlady came from behind, and opened a side door into a small parlour.

"This way, sir," she said, in a low voice.

Mr. Meriton accepted the offer, and the next moment he was seated by a cozy fireplace in a small but not unpleasant room. The landlady brought in the drink, and set it down upon the table.

"Don't you know me, sir?" said the man, with rather a sad expression.

"The other rose to his feet, looked as if about to grapple, and then drew back, his eyes fixed on the stranger. A stout, heavily bearded man, of five and thirty, it was, too."

"Dick Dart!" he cried.

"Yes, sir; but now Mr. Richard Dart, in my business, at your service. I knew you the moment I saw you."

"Then know me not," said the other, in a hollow tone, "in the best favor you can show me."

"Nay, sir; pardon me if I differ from you. My nature is not of those who forget. How can I ever allow the fact to fade from my mind that to you I owe all—life, existence?"

"Sit down," said the other. "I will believe you—believe that with you I am free from my hellish persecutor, who makes you to have this house?"

"I worked hard, and saved money," was the reply.

"Well," continued Mr. Meriton, "you seem comfortable and well-to-do."

"Pretty fair, sir," said Dick Dart; "mum's grumble. Pray, may I ask what you are doing, sir?"

"Can you believe," asked the other, "if I will tell you all. Who knows? Perhaps you may be able to assist me in my dire trouble and affliction."

The landlady fastened the door, ordered some refreshments from the bar to be passed through a kind of trap, and then, seating himself, listened with intense interest to the recital of his strange visitor.

"Your daughter, sir," said the man, respectfully, "would be about seventeen years of age?"

"Yes."

"Anything like her mother?"

"The lovely, but more soft, more gentle. I shall die if she be not restored to me soon."

"Whom do you suspect of taking her away?" asked Dick Dart.

"That man—him."

"By no means," said the man, dryly. "Because I believe that for nearly sixteen years she has lost all trace of the man who has so basely injured—has utterly forgotten him, indeed."

"Should like to see that proved, sir. All a great mistake on both sides—sure of it never can be convinced otherwise."

"Because I believe that for nearly sixteen years she has lost all trace of the man who has so basely injured—has utterly forgotten him, indeed."

"It is in vain to urge me thus. A cruel desertion of a husband can never be explained. I loved her dearly—did everything in my power to make her happy and then, in conjunction with one whose hate was venomous as the snake's, to become my bitter foe!"

"All a mistake—all a mistake," said Dart, "as you will see. But, now, to trace your daughter."

"My thanks, my life, if you can find her. All other hopes have died—I have but her. Oh, give me back my daughter, and on my knees will I thank you. I have wealth—I will share it with you and her."

"Will you give her justice?"

"What justice?"

"Restore her to her true position in society—to her name; seek out her mother, and have a frank and truthful explanation," said Dart, who in the battle of life had learned much.

"And that man?"

"Master mine, will you shake off that old dream of two years of cruel suffering, and which the hideous discipline of the mad house explains—and resolve, with my aid, to beard your enemy, to regain your true rank, to discover your wife, and, finally, to be just to your child?"

"That man has a power, money, wealth, and I shall be well if you will not make up your mind, sir."

"Dart, you are, perhaps, right. At all events, I will dive to the bottom of this mystery. In the first place, find my daughter, and then do with me as you will."

To begin, sir—has your daughter anybody in the shape of a sweetheart?" asked Dart, whose change in manner, talk and appearance was all owing to the devotion of a woman to whom he had been married sixteen years.

"None. She had a suitor whom I dismissed—Cecil Mordaunt."

"A worthy young gentleman, sir. His father's servants use this house, and Sir Vincent Mordaunt himself is quite changed. He addresses this son, and brings him up first-rate. I'm told he's a model young man."

"He's a Vincent Mordaunt—that is enough for me," replied the other.

"But you say that it was useless to argue on certain points for the present, waived the subject; but still, with an intuitive knowledge of human nature which he did credit, determined on his own responsibility to believe that, at all events, the child was to be watched."

It will be seen that, since the day when he had been hunted in the streets and rescued by Hubert Mordaunt, Dick Dart had made some progress.

After some further conversation, the father went away, agreeing to call in the evening.

CHAPTER XL.

THE MYSTERY.

The next day Cecil Mordaunt contrived to have another interview with Maud, which lasted several hours, as the signorina was particularly engaged. It was the day before her reappearance at the opera, about which all the town was ringing.

Almost every seat in the house was taken, and there was sure to be a crush. The manager and many fellow artists called to pay their respects, and from these official and professional receptions Maud was generally excluded.

But she was to witness her mother's triumph from one of those safe side boxes where one can see and hear without being seen—boxes which communicate with the orchestra by a face very much like one she knew, but still not so she thought.

"Never during my many days of travel, and I have travelled much, often as I have heard you, signorina," said a strange, harsh voice, "have I witnessed such a triumph. Signorina della Rocca, you have surpassed even yourself. And this is your charming daughter, a speaking image of yourself!"

"We are considered alike," said the singer, speaking like one in her sleep.

"Very," he replied, and passed on without saying another word.

The signorina hinted at fatigue, and drew her child away.

"Child, how can you act thus? How could you see your father, and not speak to him?" she whispered, in agonized tones.

"That my father! My dear madam, you cannot be my mother if you think that I am in my father's house. He is in my father's house, but only as a caricature is like the real personage. That my father! Oh, no! He is handsome, good, noble, that man is wicked, mean, cunning—everything that is bad!"

"Not a father, girl?" said the actress, who looked at her.

"Never! I hope," said Lucilla, in a low voice; "I do not like the profession."

Della Rocca glanced slightly, the signorina faintly smiled.

At this moment the manager brought up a gentleman, who bowed with the most respect and admiration to the glorious star.

"Mr. Hubert Mordaunt," he said, in his most silky voice.

She did not faint; she only clasped her daughter's hand, as if preparing to do battle, and then faced a stranger but admiring countenance, a face very much like one she knew, but still not so she thought.

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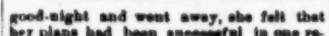
## BY MAX ADLER.

leader was, that he had entirely too much professional enthusiasm. He was a man of a tentative turn of mind, and after years of thought and experiment he produced an improved stomach pump, which included a "reversible substitution valve" that the lay conceived to be extraordinary effectiveness. When the working model was completed the doctor was very

66 A clergyman being annoyed by some of his audience going out while he was preaching, took for his text, "Thou art sighed and found wanting." Soon after commencing his discourse he said, "You will please pass out as fast as you are sighed."

BY EDEN E. KEXFORD.

For two hours they drifted here and there, in the summer moonlight, and then they turned the boat homeward. And so skillfully did Louis manage, that he did not succeed in getting a word alone with Rue. When the gentlemen bade them



longed to speak were yet unspoken.

"DEAR RUTH: Fate, or Miss Verne, I don't know which, seems determined that I shall have no opportunity of telling you what I am sure that you know already—that I love you. I am going away from

side Arcetum with his sons? How beautiful that shimmer of moonlight on the water, and how mournfully sweet the sighing of the wind among the trees! But mark: was that the wind rustling last year's dead leaves, or is it Titania holding her court and dancing by the light of firefly lamps? Oh! there's a witching light in the stars to-night."

G. M. T. (Pained sighs) writes: "Please answer the following questions: 1st. Which is the highest sphere or temple in the city? 2d. Do you think my writing is good or bad for my age (about 70), and what are the principal defects?" 3d. The two temples at Arcund and Arch are probably the highest. There is none higher, so far as we are aware, unless it be Christ Church in Second street. 3d. It is very good, but has rather too much Scotchness.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in